

population, 19 years or younger. The average household size in 2000 was 3.31 people, 10% more than the average for Los Angeles County as a whole. The growing school-age population has created overcrowded conditions at facilities throughout the Lawndale Elementary School District. New elementary and middle schools are being planned to open in 2004.

Older adults (age 65+), many of whom have lived in Lawndale for several decades, are becoming a smaller percentage of the population – 5.6% in 2000, a decrease from 5.8% in 1990 and 6.1% in 1980. Seniors continue to represent an active component of the community, however, serving on community advisory boards and volunteering in various capacities.

More than half of the community is Hispanic (52.1%), one-eighth African American (12.6%) and one-tenth Asian (9.6%). The ethnic breakdown of Lawndale's children and youth is even more pronounced – 62% of the City's public school students are Hispanic and 20.5% are African American. An additional 7.6% of students are White and 6.6% are Asian.

Lawndale is a community of working class and middle class families. The per capita income was a modest \$13,702 in 1999. Twice the number of housing units are renter-occupied as are owner-occupied. Almost two-thirds (63.4%) of adults 25 years and older have a high school diploma, some college or a college degree. The Lawndale work force is dominated by employees in sales and service industries, many of whom commute to jobs in nearby cities. Property values in Lawndale are lower than in surrounding communities. For the past fifty years, the community has provided relatively low-cost housing opportunities to families with limited means.

The community's youth in particular are put at-risk by the combination of social and economic factors that characterize Lawndale. Many families live in densely populated neighborhoods, usually in rented homes or apartments with high occupancy turnover. Limited incomes are the norm with parents working both day and night shifts to make ends meet. Many parents' limited English speaking and reading ability prevent them from helping their children with their studies. Law enforcement authorities report that approximately 350 street gang members are known to live within the service area and that approximately twelve juvenile arrests are made each month, usually for narcotics, assault and burglary offenses.

#### IV. Library Service Needs

##### A. Executive Summary

Lawndale residents need a library in their community that they can rely on for basic services to help them improve their lives and the lives of their families. Most community members have modest incomes. They cannot afford to purchase their own books, magazines, videos or compact discs on a regular basis. Many community members depend on public transportation, especially children and youth, and cannot conveniently travel to other communities to make use of more extensive libraries. Forty percent of survey respondents reported that the Lawndale Library is the principal and usually the sole library they use. Computers are not available in most homes. Many households include numerous family members and little, if any, personal space. The public library, for many residents of all ages, is the only potential resource available for books, audiovisual materials, study space and computer access.

Children and youth make up almost 35% of the population. Many children who attend Lawndale's schools read and write below their grade level. The library needs to provide a wide range of high-interest, low-vocabulary titles and an active after school program for students to stimulate these youngsters to improve their reading. Many children need regular access to homework assistance. The library needs to offer story hours and other literature-related programs aimed at young children and their families, in both English and Spanish, several times per week.

Many older children and teenagers in Lawndale are described as "at-risk" by community service providers and educators. Gang-related activity, vandalism and drug use among the community's youth are major concerns. The City opened a youth center in 2002 to address this need, and the center's success during its first year of operation is a clear signal that youth will respond to services that meet their needs. Lawndale's high school students need college selection prep and guidance materials, job skills training and career guidance. The library needs to offer space, collections, online access and age-appropriate programming to attract this age group and to assist youth to become effective members of the work force. Both groups need a place to study. Indeed, in a community with high density households, often there is nowhere to study at home.

School libraries are open only during the school day. There are no professional librarians in the elementary schools. Many students have no access to computers at home nor do their homes offer any quiet space in which they can concentrate and do their homework. With the school libraries closed after school and on the weekend and the public library able to provide only eight public access computers, children and youth – in fact, people of all ages – are, in effect, without access to computer technology.

Over half of the community is Hispanic, many of whom are English language learners. Over half of all K-12 students in Lawndale use a language other than English as their primary language. Among high school students, 24% of the students enrolled at Lawndale's two high schools have been categorized as English Learners (EL) and another 25% as Fluent-Proficient Students. The need for literacy tutoring and access to materials in both English and Spanish is acute for people of all ages. Recreational reading material in both English and in other languages, especially high-interest/low-vocabulary materials, is needed in sufficient quantities to support adults and youth who wish to improve their reading skills both in English and in their primary language.

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The community's need for access to a wide selection of recent and popular materials should be addressed as well. Lawndale has no bookstore within its city limits. For many residents, the library is one of the few choices available for reading material.

Another basic service need is access to comfortable, reasonably quiet space in which to read or study. Many residents, both adults and youth, have no place to go when they need to work on a project for school or simply when they want to sit and read.

Many families do not own a computer at home. If they do own a computer, often they do not subscribe to an Internet service provider. The library represents the only access point to digital information for many residents. Training in computer use skills and information literacy are major service needs. The library needs to offer training for people of all ages, in both English and Spanish.

Lawndale has few venues for groups to meet. Most public programming sponsored by the City is held outdoors in one of the City's parks. City Hall offers a setting for formal City-sponsored meetings. The new Bollinger Memorial Gym youth center provides limited meeting room access for children and youth. Opportunities for public meetings and gatherings beyond these two locations, however, are extremely limited. "Meet the Author" programs, lectures and panels on current events, poetry contests for young adults and other potentially valuable programs simply cannot be offered. Programs targeted toward young children and their families, in both English and in Spanish, can be offered at the existing library on a limited basis, since the programs must be held in the general public space.



#### B. Overview of Current Library Service

The Lawndale community is served by a 3,203 square foot library facility operated by the County of Los Angeles Public Library. The Lawndale Library is located at 14615 Burin Avenue in Lawndale's Civic Center and is adjacent to the Lawndale City Hall. The building, constructed in 1955, houses the library as well as a County of Los Angeles Community Health Clinic, closed by the County in 2002.

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The County Library maintains 84 community libraries and four bookmobiles throughout Los Angeles County. The Lawndale Library is one of 17 libraries in the County Library's West Region, which is administered by regional library staff located at the Carson Library. Currently, the Lawndale Library has a staff of eight people (5.0 FTE) as shown below:

Table 18.  
Current Staffing

FTE	Position	# of Staff
1.0	Community Library Manager	1
1.0	Library Assistant	1
2.0	Library Aide	4
1.0	Library Page	2
5.0 Total		8 Total

The library is open five days per week for a total of 35 public service hours. This service level has been maintained since 1994/95, following a two year period of diminished service caused by severe budget reductions. (The library was open 40 hours per week in 1991/92, 28 hours per week in 1992/93 and only 14 hours per week in 1993/94.)

The Lawndale Library maintains a 51,000-volume collection of books, magazines and audiovisual media. Approximately 6,250 items are audio or video materials. Over a third (37% or 16,700) of the book volumes are classified as children's material.

There are currently twenty-two reader seats and eight public access computers (including both Internet PCs and dedicated library catalog terminals).

Despite limited service hours over the past decade, the community has increased its use of the library over the past two to three years. This increase appears to be a continuing trend, caused by several factors:

- Installation of public computers with Internet access
- Implementation of new services, such as borrower-placed holds
- Outreach (especially to schools), programming and collection development efforts by the Community Library Manager

Customers checked out 80,245 items in 2000/01 and 79,094 items in 2001/02, an increase of approximately 10% over the previous three years. The library had 147,424 visitors in 2000/01 and 170,218 visitors in 2001/02, a marked increase of more than 30% over the walk-in counts of the previous three years.

Staff has handled an increasing number of information requests during this time period, from 70,839 requests in 1999/2000 to 128,246 requests in 2001/02. Anecdotally, staff ascribe this increase to several factors including customers' need for assistance with the Internet. Since the public Internet stations were installed, use has risen from 875 sessions in 1998/99 to 7,416 sessions in 2001/02.

The number of books and other items requested by Lawndale customers as well as the Lawndale Library items loaned to customers in other County Library communities has grown by 50% over the past two years. Lawndale Library customers requested 2,638 items in 2001/02, up from 1,871 items in 1999/2000. At the same time, the Lawndale Library loaned 12,371 items to other communities in 2001/02, up from 7,872 items loaned in 1999/2000. This increase in resource sharing is linked directly to

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implementation of borrower-placed holds, a new service throughout the County Library, which dramatically simplified and facilitated the intra-library request process.

Staff has increased the amount of programming, especially for children and their families, over the past two years, from approximately 70 to 75 programs annually in the late 1990s to 137 in 2001/02.

Table 19.  
Lawndale Library Usage Statistics

	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02
Circulation	73,207	72,135	73,035	80,245	79,094
Visitors	121,653	126,457	128,372	147,424	170,218
Information Requests	53,211	60,183	70,839	109,895	128,246
Internet Usage	N/A	875	1,320	6,431	7,416
Requests for Lawndale	1,137	1,538	1,871	2,069	2,638
Loans from Lawndale	4,430	5,685	7,872	12,786	12,371
Programs	77	60	75	113	137

Source: County of Los Angeles Public Library

Travel patterns to other libraries by community members who do have their own transportation are primarily to the libraries serving Hawthorne (a County Library facility), Torrance (an independent city library), Lennox and Gardena (both County Library facilities). Forty percent of the community survey respondents reported that the Lawndale Library is the principal and usually the sole library they use. These customers are most often children, seniors and others with limited transportation access.

### C. Collections and Shelving

The Lawndale community needs access to a collection of print and audiovisual materials that meets all residents' needs and interests. The collection should be sufficiently large and varied to ensure that immediate service needs can be met. It should include materials in Spanish and other languages that are spoken and read by the community, in all formats. Recreational reading material in English and in other languages, especially high-interest/low-vocabulary materials, in sufficient quantities, should be available. The collections need to be up-to-date and well maintained. The library's shelving capacity should enable people of all ages to conveniently and safely reach and retrieve materials on shelves that are no more than 75% to 80% full.

#### 1. Children, Literature and the Joy of Reading

In Lawndale, the "city of kids", service to children is and will continue to be one of the most important services the library performs. Many parents in Lawndale are limited English speakers and readers. The library provides children from these families, as well as English-speaking families, a vital introduction to the world of literature and the joy of reading. Many of these families are not mobile – the parents charged with care-taking cannot easily drive their children to Lawndale's library, much less to libraries in neighboring communities. Many children and youth are on their own to reach the library by foot, bicycle or public transportation. The collection needs to be sufficiently deep and broad to meet the needs of this segment of the population.

The easy book collection (picture books) needs to include multiple copies of many of the standard titles as well as a broad selection of titles that reflects the cultures and traditions represented by Lawndale's population.

Children's fiction, both in English and in other languages, needs to include works at all reading levels, both current titles and perennial favorites. Educators who work with the community stressed the need to provide recreational reading at all levels, since many children need access to pleasure reading at levels that differ from their grade level. In addition, many adults who are English learners can read and enjoy works originally written for a younger audience. Recreational reading will reflect the cultural richness of the community.

The children's collection needs to offer a substantial variety of books and audiovisual media in languages other than English. Frequently, limited English-speaking and reading children need to use materials in their native language for school assignments. Pleasure reading in Spanish and other languages will also support children and their families.

## 2. Pleasure Reading, Listening and Viewing

Many Lawndale families live on a modest income with little or no discretionary funds to purchase their own books, magazines or audiovisual materials. The library is the primary source of recreational reading, listening and viewing material for these families. The collection needs to emphasize best sellers and current topic materials for people of all ages. This material needs to be displayed prominently, using retail-style merchandising shelves to allow visitors to see the new and popular titles that are available.

The library also needs to offer current and varied collections of audio books, books and music on CD, videos, and DVDs – a collection of approximately 8,625 AV items is recommended, or 10% of the total collection. Materials for teens are especially needed in these categories to attract and sustain a teenage clientele.

A strong collection of high-interest, low-vocabulary titles, in English, Spanish and Vietnamese, is needed to encourage youth to practice reading and improve their reading levels. This collection would complement the sustained silent reading program that has been in place at Leuzinger High School for the past two years.

## 3. Self-Improvement and Quality of Life for Youth and Adults

Equally important to this community is access to information and guidance for self-improvement and an enhanced quality of life. Materials in English and Spanish are needed on career advancement and job skills, adult education topics, home improvement and many other self-help areas. Materials on computer literacy and computer skills are critical in this community. Materials in print and audiovisual formats that foster English learning skills are crucial. Many adults are enrolled in literacy classes. They need supplementary reading materials and skills-building practice materials.

## 4. Multicultural Heritage

Over half of Lawndale's population is Hispanic. African Americans make up 12.6% of the community and Asians another 9.6%. The cultural diversity found in the community needs to be reflected in the library's collections. Books, magazines, newspapers and audiovisual materials are needed in languages other than English. The collection should

include histories of the nations and regions from which families have emigrated to the United States as well as celebrations of each culture's music, cuisine, religious life and customs. Travel guides in other languages and in English are needed. Each culture's music, heritage and literature should be represented on tapes and films as well.

#### D. Reader and Study Seating

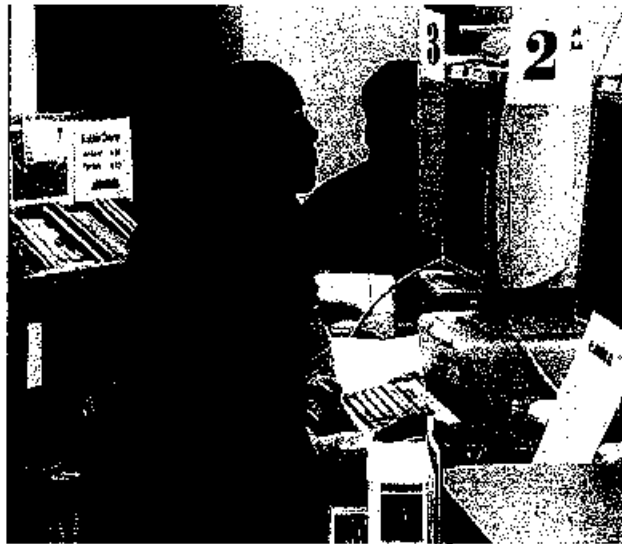
Overall, the library needs to provide ample and varied seating for people of all ages, including comfortable reading seats for adults, cozy armchairs or window seats for parents and children to sit together and read, study tables and carrels for individual research and study, and acoustically separate areas with conference tables for small group study, tutoring and similar uses. Many Lawndale residents live in multigenerational households. Family members share living space with the result that there is frequently no quiet area within their home for reading or study. For adults, teens and children alike, the library is often the only available space in which quiet, concentrated study or reading can take place.



#### E. Computer Technology and Information Services

The typical Lawndale family household either has no computer or has a computer without Internet access. Most children, teens and adults in the community need to go outside their homes for access to up-to-date computer technology. High school students have access to computers and the Internet at their schools during the school day (7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.). Unless a teacher allows a student to remain in the classroom after school to use a computer, the library is the only alternative location for most of Lawndale's 4,461 high school and Environmental Charter School students. Often, the library's computers are the only affordable high transmission speed Internet access point available to residents, thus acting as the community's primary bridge across the "digital divide".

The library requires a sufficient number of computers to support the needs of children, teens and adults, offering access not only to the County Library's online catalog and a growing array of online information resources but also access to the Internet, to e-mail and to a variety of software applications (e.g., word processing, spreadsheets, Powerpoint™).



Community members need access to library staff with reference assistance skills. Many people in the community do not possess sophisticated information search skills. They need help from trained library staff to effectively use both print and online reference sources. The County Library is building an online reference collection accessible through its website. The community needs access to free training classes to learn how to search online information resources, to improve computer skills generally and to improve information literacy skills of adults, teens and children.

The library currently offers eight public access computers. The total quantity of public computers needs to increase to approximately thirty-eight – distributed to offer eighteen in the open access areas, ten in the Technology Training Room, four in the Career Center and six in the Homework Center. Emphasis needs to be placed on providing students with access to computers not only for Internet research and library catalog access but also to provide access to software applications (word processing, spreadsheets, Powerpoint™ and other programs), to college selection and career guidance software, to software that builds reading and literacy skills, and to educational software and games for young children.

There is no recognized planning guideline in effect currently that establishes the quantity of computer workstations needed for public libraries. Current best planning practice in California public libraries, however, is to provide one public workstation for every 750 to 1,250 residents of the community. The Lawndale community's need for access to computers is significant. The thirty-eight computers recommended will allow the library to offer one workstation for every 921 residents in the year 2020, compared to the current ratio of one workstation for every 3,964 residents.

This target is in line with the County Library's recently completed Service Level Guidelines Recommendations report, which sets an average of one computer workstation per 1,000 people served as the system-wide recommendation.

#### F. Programming and Meeting Room Space

The existing library has no enclosed or dedicated space for programming or meetings. Every program held at the library takes place in the general public space.



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The community will attend library-sponsored programs if they are offered. Storytelling, puppet shows, crafts activities and other programs for children will attract many participants. Teen programming will be popular if topics are thoughtfully chosen and well publicized. Teen book discussion groups, poetry clubs and other activities were suggested by Leuzinger High School students as inducements for teens to visit the library. The Friends of the Library are currently developing an adult book discussion group to be held in the library's public space. "Meet The Author" nights and programs on current topics (e.g., job search skills and resume writing, health issues, parenting classes) have also been suggested by community members as potential programs that would bring them to the library.



In addition, the Lawndale community needs free venues for public meetings and for meetings of community organizations and volunteer groups. Currently, these organizations vie for use of the City's Civic Center meeting room and conference rooms available at Bollinger Memorial Gym.

A meeting room that can accommodate seventy-five adults in an auditorium-style seating arrangement is recommended for Lawndale's proposed library. This is in line with the County Library's recent Service Level Guidelines report, which recommends inclusion of a meeting room in each library facility, with seating in the range of 75 to 150, depending on the size of the building. In addition the meeting room will be equipped with a data/video projector, projections screen, CATV and Internet access to accommodate various program requirements. The City of Lawndale would like to hold joint celebrations with the library and make use of the meeting room and large plaza area. They foresee special programs for children and families.

#### G. School Library Service Needs

The Lawndale Elementary School District and Centinela Valley Union High School District serve Lawndale's youth. The High School District's mission statement is as follows:

The Centinela Valley Union High School District is committed to providing an educational environment in which all students succeed. Students will be prepared to meet the challenges of higher education and the future demands of a technological society.

The Lawndale Elementary School District has articulated its mission and goals in a set of Guiding Principles that includes the following:

- We put our students first.
- We are a nurturing community, which provides a positive, caring and safe learning environment for all.
- We are enriched by our cultural and individual diversity ensuring equal opportunity for all.
- We are committed to high quality and excellence.
- We are a community that cares about the total person at school, at home and in the community.
- We celebrate our accomplishments.
- We believe in lifelong learning.
- We believe that everyone will recognize their individual gifts, excel, and strive to reach their potential.
- We believe that families, school, and the community practice shared leadership and collaboration to help everyone succeed.
- We utilize our resources to best meet the needs of students.
- We are guided by integrity, honesty and responsibility.

School personnel serving Lawndale's students at all grade levels demonstrate an ongoing strong commitment to the goals and ideals expressed above. Both the Elementary School District and the High School District have engaged in creative and successful fundraising efforts to apply for and acquire grant funds to supplement baseline funding. Both districts have strong track records of collaborative work with the City of Lawndale and other entities to leverage funding for the benefit of their students. There is a keen awareness of the many obstacles and challenges in their students' paths – families' limited economic resources, limited access to computers outside the school day, limited English language skills of many parents and students. Both districts and the City are enthusiastic about collaborative efforts even beyond those described in the Joint Use Agreement.

School libraries cannot meet students' needs adequately despite the ongoing and creative efforts of both Districts. The high school libraries have very limited materials budgets and cannot stock more than a token number of high-interest, low-vocabulary books, a major need for students who read lower their grade level. Many students need this material not only in English but also in Spanish and Vietnamese.

Few Lawndale students at any grade level have access at home to a computer or the Internet. When the school day is over, most students must compete for one of the public library's six Internet computers or travel to a library in another city for this purpose. Generally, Lawndale students depend entirely on public transportation.

Teens, educators, parents and library staff all commented on the intense need for accessible study and reading space for students of all levels. Many households are so populated that there is no quiet space available in which to study.

#### H. Student Support – Homework Assistance, Career Skills

Community informants, both educators and City staff, frequently stressed the need to help young people in Lawndale train for and get jobs. Seminars in job-seeking skills and in appropriate behavior once employed were mentioned as needed by both teachers and youth.

In addition, students at all grade levels need space, collection resources, computers and instruction to help them with their school assignments. Many students read and write below their grade level and need literacy coaching. Many students have no effective access to computers at home and cannot research or word process their assignments. Even basic computer use skills are lacking for many students.

The Career Center, with its collection of job preparation materials, computers with resume and college selection software, and career and higher education guidance and training opportunities, will provide a key focal point for community youth who are preparing for their future. The Center will form a nucleus of information and support that both the County Library and the High School District will use to connect students to appropriate resources, both published materials and local contacts. In addition, the Homework Center will provide seating for up to twelve students, six computers, shelving to house related materials, and instruction space. High school students will be recruited to staff the Center as mentors and perform community service as they participate in the program. The library will also become a training venue for youth who are interested in exploring a teaching career.

## V. Service Limitations of the Existing Library

### A. Overview and Executive Summary

Lawndale's existing library facility is a 3,203 square foot building that was constructed in 1955. Its small size and outdated electrical infrastructure impede the provision of effective library service. The 51,000 item collection is at capacity. Packed book shelves line every wall of the public area and consume much of the facility's public space to a height of 84". The impact of this shelving-filled space is visually overwhelming and psychologically intimidating.

Even though shelving for books and audiovisual material has been given first priority, the facility cannot accommodate the shelving needed to house an adequately sized collection, much less offer space in which to display and market the collections. Collections are capped at the present level, well below the appropriate service level for a community of Lawndale's size and demographic makeup. Several types of materials that are vitally important for this community: collections in other languages; children's books, both recreational and study-related; and audio and video formats, cannot be developed to the extent needed.

The facility contains twenty-two reader seats, eight located at two 4-place tables in the adult area and fourteen in the children's area. Seating is so limited that many customers report that they do not even consider using the library to study or read. Instead, they enter the building only to find and check out materials for home use. Over time, some residents with access to their own transportation have migrated to libraries in neighboring communities that have more seating capacity. Space and wiring is available for six public access Internet computers and two library catalog computers, significantly less than the quantity needed by this community.

There is no dedicated, appropriate space for library programming or meetings. Staff conduct children's story hours regularly, an average of one to two programs per week, with audiences of 25 to 35 young children and their parents. These take place in the main public space. The inevitable noise and disruption fills the facility before, during and after each program. No separate space exists for tutoring or small group study.

The single service desk is visually prominent, located in the middle of the public space and equidistant from each of the two entrances. Its configuration is awkward, however, and forces the public to form a queue that crosses the main path of travel within the library. The public contact point at the desk is narrow and confining.

The staff work room is too small to accommodate the space needs of the current staff. Tasks that require concentration and that should be performed behind the scenes cannot be accommodated in the space. Staff is required to do these tasks in the public space and at the service desk, between interactions with the public, which erodes productivity. There is no viable break area in the library. The staff work room contains a kitchen counter, hot plate, microwave oven and small refrigerator. Staff prepare their meals in the work room, then take their lunch breaks in the parking lot or in their cars. Storage for supplies, programming props and book donations is extremely limited.

The existing library is essentially one undifferentiated volume of space approximately 45 feet by 50 feet in size. The County Library and the local library staff have worked hard to organize the interior, the shelving and the furniture in an efficient, streamlined manner

and to make the most of the resources at hand. In this environment, the scope of services that can be provided is extremely limited.

Lawndale's school libraries cannot meet the needs of the community's students. Although each school campus has a library, only the middle school is staffed by a certificated librarian. The high school libraries are staffed by paraprofessionals and the elementary school libraries are staffed by parent volunteers. School libraries are open only during the school day, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. On some elementary school campuses, the library is open fewer than five days per week. For many students, the computers at their school library and the public library are the only computer equipment available to them.

School District operating budgets were substantially reduced in the 2002/03 school year, further eroding school libraries' materials budgets. Collections that are unable to meet students' needs will become even less adequate. High-interest/low-vocabulary collections are needed to support students who read below their grade level. The school libraries cannot provide these collections now and will be even less able to do so this year and next, with budget reductions at the District level.

#### B. Collections

Lawndale's collections are severely constrained by the existing facility. With a total of only 3,203 gross square feet, the library is filled with furniture, shelving and equipment. The library's collections have been given top priority and are housed on an estimated 1,750 three-foot shelves and six freestanding paperback spinners. Most shelves are 100% full. The library's shelving staff constantly shifts materials from one shelving section to another to make room for returned items and new titles.



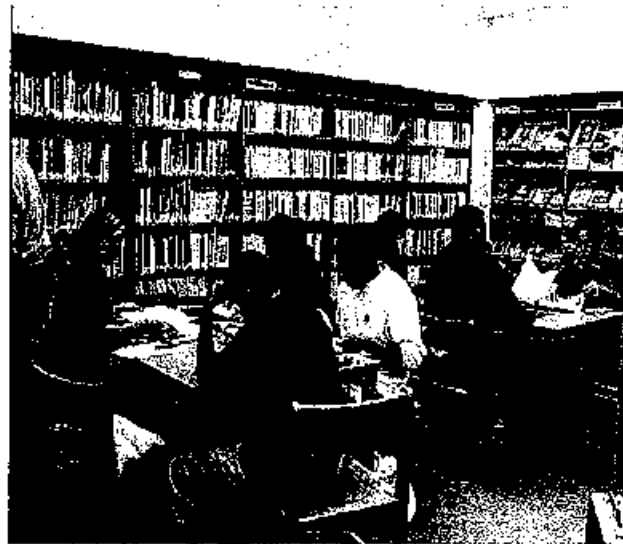
The collection is capped at its present size and cannot grow to meet community needs. Virtually every component of the library's collection is undersized – the reference and nonfiction book collections cannot meet individual research needs; the children's book collection meets neither the recreational reading nor school assignment needs of children; the easy book collection cannot meet the needs of preschoolers and their families; the international languages collection cannot serve Lawndale's Hispanic or

various Asian communities; nor can the audiovisual collection serve the needs of adults, families and children.

The collections that can be housed in the facility are packed onto the shelves. Display or face-out shelving is impossible to provide, eliminating customers' ability to browse much of the collection. The various audiovisual collections have been shelved wherever there is room to squeeze them in, eliminating the ability to create a visible, unified, attractive audiovisual area. Customers often overlook a collection because it is tucked into an available corner not easily seen from the main path of travel. There is no display shelving for new books or popular titles. Fifty percent of the children's book shelving is too high for children to comfortably reach.

#### C. Reader Seating

The existing library offers almost no seating. The adult area contains eight seats at two 4-place rectangular tables. The children's area contains eight seats at two 4-place tables and four toddler chairs. Many customers report that they use the library only to find and check out books and other materials. There is no variety of seating types – no comfortable lounge seating for casual or extended reading, no window seats or oversize armchairs for parents and children to read together, no one-place study carrels for individual study, no acoustically separate study areas for small groups to work together.



#### D. Staff Offices, Workstations, Visual Supervision

The existing library has one service point at which staff handles all circulation, registration, reference, computer sign-ups and assistance requests. The service desk is centrally located and space efficient, providing staff with a commanding view into each area of the public space. The number of staff on duty at the desk varies from one to three, depending on the number of library customers in the facility.

The desk layout can diminish service quality, however, especially during peak periods. Its box-like shape forces all customers into a single queue no matter what type of assistance they need. At busy times, eight to twelve people can be waiting in line for help and blocking the main flow of traffic through the public space. The County Library is interested in offering self-service check-out to its customers. Lawndale's current library,

however, is too small to accommodate an additional piece of equipment at or near the service desk.

The staff sorts book trucks and checks in returning materials at the service desk on a regular basis. There is a constant flow of book trucks in and out of the desk area that is not large enough to accommodate the volume of equipment. A continuing sense and appearance of congestion pervades the service desk space.



The staff workroom is approximately 12 feet by 18 feet and cannot accommodate the work space needs of the current staff. The Community Library Manager and Circulation Supervisor each has a desk in this room. In addition, staff check in returning materials, pack, unpack and process incoming and outgoing shipments, perform simple mending and physical processing of materials, and any other tasks that cannot be performed at the service desk. The room also contains a sink and kitchen counter, hot plate, microwave, and small refrigerator and is the only place inside the library in which staff can eat their lunch or take their breaks. Several staff members routinely go outside the building to eat their meals or take their breaks in their cars.

The facility has two public entrances on the south and the north facades of the building. A single public entrance would allow more usable space for seating and collections and would contribute toward reducing the current rate of loss due to theft.

#### E. Technology

Most Lawndale residents have no computer at home or have a computer that has no Internet or e-mail access. For many adults and children, the public library is the only feasible access point to these resources. The existing facility provides space and wiring for only eight public access computers. Evidence of the inadequacy of this quantity is plentiful. The library staff books the computers constantly. Individuals wait for considerable lengths of time to use a machine. Verbal negotiations over which machine they want to use and which time slot they are signing up for are ongoing at the service desk throughout the day. The scant existing seating offers no laptop plug-in capability.

The public has asked for computer training and the staff would like to offer training classes, but the existing facility offers no space in which training can take place without seriously disrupting individual use of the computers.

F. Meeting Rooms

The existing library has no meeting room space. Any library-sponsored programs or events must take place within the main public space, on the lawn outside the public entrance or at an off-site location. Library staff cannot effectively initiate services with significant programming components due to the lack of meeting room space.

G. Special Purpose Spaces

The lack of separate spaces in which small groups can meet also prevents the library from being used by community groups for their meetings, for tutoring classes or for small group study.

H. School Library Unmet Service Needs

The school libraries that serve Lawndale's schools are open only during the school day. Students have no access to school library resources after school, during evening hours or during the weekend. The high school libraries offer computers with Internet access, word processing and other software applications, but none of this equipment is accessible beyond the hours that school is in session. Since few Lawndale students at any grade level have access at home to a computer or the Internet, this means that most students must compete for one of the public library's six Internet computers or travel to a library in another city for this purpose.

The high school libraries have very limited materials budgets. They cannot offer the number of titles or copies needed to serve the school population. High-interest, low-vocabulary books are a particular need, since so many students read lower their grade level. Many students need this material not only in English but also in Spanish and Vietnamese. The school libraries can offer very small collections of this material.



## VI. Physical Limitations of the Existing Library

### A. Executive Summary

The Lawndale Library is part of a shared-use building that also contains a County health clinic that was closed by the County in 2002. The building was constructed in 1955. The library portion of the structure is 3,203 square feet. The structure and its mechanical systems are in generally sound condition although elements of its design do not meet current seismic resistance code requirements. The building size limits its overall effectiveness.

Mechanical chiller equipment was replaced in 2000. The main air-handling system cannot support reliable airflow in the library's public space, however, and three window air-conditioning units have been installed to supplement airflow, adding to the building's energy costs. Interior lighting is outmoded and less efficient than currently available lighting systems.

Low exterior lighting levels at night and competition for the library's nine parking spaces create potentially hazardous walking conditions outside the building.

ADA compliance is lacking in the restrooms, both the one public restroom and the one staff restroom. Access for the disabled is limited at the main, south-facing entrance. There is no parking for the disabled. Crowded conditions within the library create obstacles, though stack aisles are ADA compliant.

The public area is essentially one large cube of space. Noise that is generated anywhere within it cannot be controlled or modulated. Hard surfaces and maximized use of space for computers and other needed equipment add to the general noise level.

The structure anchors the northern edge of Lawndale's Civic Center and is landlocked on three sides. Expansion is only possible toward the south, which would require demolishing the south block wall defining the existing library. The elimination of this wall would require complete redesign of the existing seismic restraint system for the structure.

The facility's small dimensions preclude any thoughtful separation of functions within the public space. Conflicting use of adjacent spaces is inevitable due to the severely constrained volume of space. Two public entrances erode the space available for library service within the building.

### B. Structural

The library was constructed in 1955. It is a one-story building with wood diaphragm and reinforced concrete masonry load bearing shear walls around the perimeter. The library occupies 3,203 square feet in the eastern portion of the structure. A Los Angeles County health clinic, closed in 2002 by the County, occupies the western portion of the structure.

The building is generally in good condition. Interior finishes were renovated within the last two years, including repainted ceiling and walls, new carpet and new vinyl flooring adjacent to the service desk.

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The structure does not meet current seismic design criteria. The reinforced masonry shear walls do not comply with current County building code requirements for lateral load resistance. The building code no longer allows the type of roof sheathing system used. The connections between the shear walls and the flexible diaphragm do not comply with the current code.

C. Energy Conservation

Mechanical systems for the building are generally in good condition. The chiller was replaced in 2000. The structure's air-handling system is, however, insufficient to keep the temperature in the library public space at a constant, comfortable level. Three supplemental, through-the-wall air-conditioning units have been installed in the library space to accommodate evening and weekend operations since the main HVAC system for the entire building is operated only during business hours, Monday through Friday.

Interior lighting is older prismatic lens lighting, an outmoded technology that is less efficient than current lighting systems.

D. Health and Safety

Low exterior lighting levels at each entrance and along the nearby sidewalks create a potentially hazardous walking condition after dark.

A small parking lot with nine parking spaces is located adjacent to the library's main entrance. Competition is stiff for these spaces throughout the day, often creating a queue of waiting vehicles. Many children and adult pedestrians walk through this area to and from the library, creating a potentially dangerous situation when drivers move suddenly to capture a parking space.

E. Disabled Access

The library has one public and one staff restroom. Neither restroom is fully ADA compliant.



Although the walkway at the library main (south-facing) entrance is in good condition, the cross slope at the entrance exceeds the maximum slope allowed by code.

The parking lot has no dedicated parking for the disabled.

Stack aisles and other paths of travel within the library space are at ADA minimum requirements. Miscellaneous furniture items, book trucks and other pieces of equipment often block aisles and create obstacles for people in wheelchairs.

#### F. Acoustics

The library has an open space layout. It is essentially one volume of space in which noise levels cannot be modulated or controlled. As additional services and equipment have been added to the space, the ambient noise level has steadily risen. Hard floor surfaces through the central public space generate footfall noise that adds to the general noise levels. There is no "sanctuary of quiet space" within the building.

#### G. Space Flexibility and Expandability

The structure is bordered by streets on three sides. The library cannot expand within the existing building footprint. Expansion of the existing building to the south is possible. Such an expansion would require significant and costly modification to the structure related to the seismic and lateral design of the building and may significantly compromise the organization and operation of a library designed within the existing structure.

Electrical power for the building is insufficient to support computer equipment and other technology beyond the existing number of workstations and equipment.

#### H. Functional Space Relationships

The small size of the building forces all components of the library into close proximity. Noise-generating areas, such as the children's space, cannot be separated from areas intended for quiet reading or study. The building's overall space constraints allow only rudimentary space planning.

The library's two public entrances erode the amount of space that can be used for library service and increase the potential for book theft.

#### I. Site

The nine parking spaces in the lot adjacent to the library main entrance and nearby street parking are inadequate for the size of the community (see also comment in Section D above).

#### J. Other Considerations

Storage space is extremely limited in the building.

The one public restroom available is often occupied, frequently for long periods of time. A waiting line often develops and library staff must mediate disputes between customers over use of the restroom facility.

## VII. Space Needs Assessment

### A. Introduction and Spaces Summary

Lawndale needs a library facility with a total of approximately 17,360 gross square feet, with the following spaces allocated to various services and functions. A building this size will house the 86,250 item collection recommended for Lawndale, will provide 123 reader seats, 38 public computers, a meeting room and the other special purpose spaces recommended in this report.

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Table 20.  
Spaces Summary

Space	Square Feet
1.1 Public Entrance/Lobby	87 and GSF
1.2 Meeting Room	1,034
1.3 Meeting Room Storage	141
1.4 Public Restrooms (Men's and Women's)	GSF
2.1 Self Checkout and Reserves	162
2.2 Customer Service Desk	320
3.1 New and Popular Books Browsing	262
3.2 Information Desk	151
3.3 Reference Collection	62
3.4 Computers for Adults	288
3.5 Adult Fiction and Genre Books	1,028
3.6 Adult Nonfiction Books	1,066
3.7 Quiet Area	240
3.8 Community Living Room/Magazines and Newspapers	381
3.9 Audiovisual Media for Adults	162
3.10 Adult Spanish/International Languages Collection	554
3.11 Young Adult Area	438
3.12 Career Center	460
3.13 Group Study Room	150
3.14 Conference Room	250
3.15 Copier Area	51
3.16 Technology Training Room	420
3.17 Friends of the Library Book Sale and Donations Sorting	100
4.1 Children's Services Desk and Reference Books	62
4.2 Children's New Books and Magazines	94
4.3 Family Space/Parents Collection	191
4.4 Children's Easy Books	704
4.5 Storytelling and Programming Space	286
4.6 Children's Programming Storage	87
4.7 Computers for Children	216
4.8 Children's Circulating Books	1,002
4.9 Children's Audiovisual Media Collection	113
4.10 Children's Spanish/International Languages Collection	181
4.11 Family Restroom (1)	GSF
4.12 Homework Center	597
5.1 Community Library Manager's Office	120
5.2 Staff Work Area	874
5.3 Supplies and Equipment Storage	150
5.4 Main Communications Room	125
5.5 Delivery Vestibule	46
5.6 Staff Room	410
5.7 Staff Restrooms (2)	GSF
5.8 Custodial Room and Supplies	60
5.9 Building Maintenance Supplies	GSF
Total Assignable Square Feet:	13,125
Total Gross Square Feet @ 76% net-to-gross:	17,360

## B. Collections and Shelving

Currently, the library offers a collection of 44,750 books and 6,250 audiovisual items, for a total collection of 51,000 items, or 1.6 items per capita available overall. This collection size is too limited to serve the current population, much less meet the needs of Lawndale's 35,000 residents projected for 2020. The English language collection lacks the depth and variety to meet the needs of students' school assignments, to serve the many families with preschool and early elementary school age students. It is also deficient for adults' informational needs, especially in the quantity of language learning, job and career related materials and current fiction and nonfiction. The Spanish language collection in all formats should be increased, both in adult and juvenile material.

Library planning authorities stress the importance of offering an adequate volumes-per-capita ratio to meet the community's overall reading and informational needs. The current collection size needs to be expanded by approximately 35,000 items. This represents 67% increase in on-site book stock, or 2.5 items per capita in the year 2020, provide the breadth and depth of titles needed for readers and students at all levels to find what they need. The audiovisual collections need to be increased dramatically. This community includes a large number of English language learners of all ages. Language learning tapes and videos are needed, as well as an ample supply of English language films and recordings that can introduce spoken English into the community's homes – even feature films can be useful to people who want to improve their English.

By 2020, the Lawndale population will need a book collection of approximately 77,625 volumes. In addition, the library will need to offer approximately 8,625 audiovisual items. The total collection should include 86,250 items, to provide 2.5 items per capita. These targets will place the Lawndale collection at the size threshold recommended by library planning authority Joseph Wheeler, who suggested a collection of 2.5 – 2.75 items per capita for communities between 35,000 and 100,000.

This target is slightly lower than the recommended collection size in the County Library's Service Level Guidelines Recommendations completed in September 2002, which used Wheeler as a base and set the target for Los Angeles County community library collections at 2.75 items per capita. The planning committee felt that 2.5 items per capita was appropriate for Lawndale since a segment of Lawndale adults often travel between Lawndale, Hawthorne, Torrance and other surrounding communities and have access to the collections in those neighboring communities. The less mobile population segments – children, young families and seniors, however, do not have access to these resources and must be provided with an on-site collection that provides 2.5 items per capita.

The book collection should be allocated as follows – 35% to children's materials, 61.25% to materials for adults and 3.75% to materials for young adults. Summaries of the collection components are provided in *Appendix F: Lawndale Library Collection Growth Plan* and *Appendix G: Lawndale Library Collection and Shelving Needs*.

Space allocations for shelving are based on the guidebook Building Blocks for Planning Functional Library Space, published by the Library Administration and Management Association (LAMA) in 2001. Each single-sided shelving section is allocated 10.3 square feet. Retail display-type shelving units are allocated 25 square feet each and are treated as furniture. Assumptions regarding the number of items per linear foot of shelving and

per shelving unit vary by type of material, height of the unit and type of shelving. Each of these assumptions can be found in *Appendix G*.

The collections for adults should be housed on full height shelves (90" high). Shelving on the base shelf should be used sparingly. Audiovisual materials, teen books, and magazines and newspapers should be housed on mid-height shelves (66" to 72" high). New books and popular titles should be displayed on retail-style merchandising shelving. Children's books should be placed on no higher than 66" shelving. Material for young children needs to be shelved on low shelving (42" to 45" high).

### C. Reader Seats

The library's current seating capacity is severely deficient at 22 seats for both adults and children. This translates into a dismal 0.63 seats per 1,000 people served. Seating is routinely filled to capacity, with students sitting on the floor to complete their homework. This deficit is particularly significant in this community. Families on a limited income are often wary of checking materials out for home use and generating overdue fees. Frequently, parents will require their children to use library materials in the facility and not allow them to take books home. This adds even more burden on to the library's seating capacity.

This report recommends a six-fold seating capacity increase in the proposed library – a total of 123 seats - 95 seats in open access areas, 16 seats in group study spaces and 12 seats in the Homework Center. This aspect of the Lawndale library is perhaps the most pressing need – to allow community members access to appropriate study and reading space. The augmented seating will provide Lawndale with 3.5 seats per 1,000 residents in the year 2020 – solidly within the planning guidelines recommended by planning authority Joseph Wheeler. Given the high number of children and youth in Lawndale and the dearth of alternate suitable spaces for study and reading in the community, this component of library service is especially critical.

Joseph Wheeler suggests a range that would quadruple Lawndale's seating capacity: 5.0 seats per 1,000 for communities from 10,000 to 35,000 and 3.0 seats for communities from 35,000 to 100,000. Given Lawndale's 35,000 projected population, the planning committee felt that a target above the threshold level at 35,000 is appropriate, even though this target exceeds the 2.5 seats for 1,000 people served average seating capacity called out in the County Library's recent Service Level Guidelines Recommendations report.

The recommended seating capacity includes 95 reader seats in open access spaces, 16 seats in two group study rooms and 12 seats in the Homework Center. Twenty-three of the seats in open areas are lounge seats, eight seats are at 1-place carrels and 64 seats are at 4-place tables. The group study seats are at conference tables. The Homework Center seats are at 4-place tables.

Seats at 4-place tables have been allocated 25 square feet per seat. Seats at 1-place carrels have been allocated 30 square feet per seat. Lounge seating has been allocated 35 square feet per seat. These allocations are in line with LAMA's Building Blocks for Planning Functional Library Space.

#### D. Computer Technology

The library currently offers eight public access computers. The total quantity of public computers needs to increase to approximately 38 – distributed to offer 18 in the open access areas, ten in the Technology Training Room, four in the Career Center and six in the Homework Center. Emphasis needs to be placed on providing students with access to computers not only for Internet research and library catalog access but also to provide access to software applications (word processing, spreadsheets, Powerpoint™ and other programs), to college selection and career guidance software, to software that builds reading and literacy skills, and to educational software and games for young children.

There is no recognized planning guideline in effect currently that establishes the quantity of computer workstations needed for public libraries. Current best planning practice in California public libraries, however, is to provide one public workstation for every 750 to 1,250 residents of the community. The Lawndale community's need for access to computers is significant. The 38 computers recommended will allow the library to offer one workstation for every 921 residents in the year 2020, compared to the current ratio of one workstation for every 3,964 residents.

This target is in line with the County Library's recently completed Service Level Guidelines Recommendations report, which sets an average of one computer workstation per 1,000 people served as the system-wide recommendation.

Workstations have been planned for staff at each service desk and on each staff desk in the workroom. Space for a telecommunications server room (called the Main Communications Room) has also been allocated.

Sit-down computers have each been allocated 36 square feet. Stand-up computers have each been allocated 16 square feet. Shared print-release stations will be provided for each group of computers.

Each service desk staffing point is allocated 50 square feet. This includes the counter space as well as space on either side of the counter for staff and public to interact. Queuing space is counted separately.

Electrical and data connections at each table/carrel seat in the public space are recommended to allow customers to conveniently use computer equipment they bring into the building as well as library-supplied equipment.

The building should be designed to be wireless-friendly to allow customers and the library staff to make use of wireless equipment in the future.



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**E. Staff Offices and Workstations**

The current staffing for the library is:

Table 21.  
Current Staffing

FTE	Position	# of Staff
1.0	Community Library Manager	1
1.0	Library Assistant	1
2.0	Library Aide	4
1.0	Library Page	2
5.0 Total		8 Total

The staff projected to operate the new facility is shown Table 22. The additional staff will be needed to handle the anticipated increases in materials handling (check-in, sorting and shelving of items returning from circulation), technology assistance, and after school student support and increased programming.

Table 22.  
Projected Staffing

FTE	Position	# of Staff	Workstation
1.0	Community Library Manager	1	1 private office
3.0	Full-time Staff (1 Children's Librarian; 2 Library Assistants)	3	3 modular units, 8' x 8'
4.0 – 4.5	Part-time Staff (On-call Librarians; Library Aides)	8 – 9	1 modular unit, 8' x 8' 5 modular units, 6' x 6'
0.5	Student Professional Worker (Computer equipment maintenance)	1	1 modular unit, 6' x 6'
3.0	Library Pages (including Homework Helpers)	6	n.a.
11.5 - 12.0	Total	19 - 20	1 office; 10 modulars

The Community Library Manager will need a private office, based on the nature of his or her duties. As the primary supervisory staff at the facility, this person will need to be able to conduct confidential conversations with individual staff members or with small groups. In addition, he or she will on occasion need to speak privately with members of the public.

An office of 120 square feet is recommended for the Community Library Manager to accommodate that person's desk, computer, task chair, shelving and lateral files, and a small conference table and guest chairs.

Each full-time and part-time librarian and library assistant will be assigned a modular office workstation, 8' x 8', for their off-desk work space. In addition, a shared module, 6' x 6', is recommended for handling such tasks as periodicals check-in, book mending and special projects. Ten modular office workstations are projected for the staff work space.

**F. Meeting Room Space**

A 75-seat meeting room is recommended for the library. A second programming space is also recommended in the Children's Services Area for storytelling and other events for

young children and their parents and caregivers. The need for programming space is described in *Sections IV and V*.

The meeting room seating has been allocated 13 square feet per seat. This allocation slightly exceeds the 10 to 12 square feet per seat guideline suggested in Building Blocks for Planning Functional Library Space, 2001 edition. It is recommended to provide more flexibility in the meeting room space for performances and activities that may require more maneuverability. The seating recommended for the storytelling space has been allocated 10 square feet per person. This allocation seems reasonable since the children will sit on the floor of the storytelling space and will take up less room than if seated on chairs. The meeting room will open out to the plaza to allow for larger library/City events.

#### G. Special Purpose Spaces

The proposed library's special purpose spaces are the Homework Center, the Career Center, and the Technology Training Room. Computer workstations in these spaces have been allocated 36 square feet each. Seating has been allocated at 25 square feet each.

#### H. Non-Assignable Space

This report recommends a total building size of 17,360 gross square feet, preferably on one level. A 76% efficiency ratio is assumed for the building – providing 13,125 net assignable square feet that can be used for seating, shelving, computers, service desks and staff work areas. Slightly less than 25% of the gross square footage (4,235 square feet) has been set aside as non-assignable space. This includes the building's mechanical systems, electrical closet, storage spaces, restrooms, circulation space throughout the facility and other elements of the building not listed in the Space Needs Summary (Table 20) as one of the building's assignable spaces. The net-to-gross square footage ratio used is based on the standards proposed in Building Blocks for Planning Functional Library Space.

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**Table 23. Square Footage Allocation Conversion Factors**

Item	Conversion Factor
Shelving, single-sided section, 3' wide	10.3 SF / section
Display shelving, double-sided, retail-type, 4' long x 3' wide	25 SF / item
Volumes per Linear Foot:	
Books, adult, fiction and nonfiction	8 volumes / linear foot
Books, reference	7 volumes / linear foot
Books, new and display	6.5 volumes / linear foot
Books, adult, international languages	10 volumes / linear foot
Books, paperback, on spinners inset into regular shelving	16 volumes / linear foot
Books, children's, fiction and nonfiction	10 volumes / linear foot
Books, children's easy books	15 volumes / linear foot
Videos	7 volumes / linear foot
DVDs, compact discs in AV browse bins	20 volumes / linear foot
Audiobooks and books on CD	7 volumes / linear foot
Language learning audio material	7 volumes / linear foot
Magazines, current display	1 title / linear foot
Magazines, backfiles, in pamphlet boxes	2.5 boxes / linear foot
Newspapers, current display	1 title / 1.5 linear foot
Seating:	
@ 4-place table	25 SF / seat
@ 1-place carrel	30 SF / seat
Lounge chair	35 SF / seat
@ 4-place round table	22 SF / seat
@ 4-place round toddler table	22 SF / seat
Meeting room seating	13 SF / seat
Storytelling seating	10 SF / seat
Computers and other equipment:	
Public access computer, sit-down	36 SF / workstation
Public access workstation, stand-up	16 SF / workstation
Homework Center workstation	36 SF / workstation
Technology Training workstation	36 SF / workstation
Self checkout workstation	35 SF / workstation
Staff office system workstations, 8' x 8'	80 SF / workstation
Staff office system workstations, 6' x 6'	45 SF / workstation